CHALLENGE

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Cops Protect Fellow Nazis — Again

INDIANAPOLIS, IN, Aug. 24 — Over 200 anti-racists protested against the 30 Nazis on the statehouse steps today. The young and vigorous anti-racist crowd enthusiastically followed PLP chants such as, "Death, Death, Death to the Nazis! Power, Power, Power to the Workers!" PLP members sold 120 CHALLENGES and distributed 250 leaflets. The anti-fascist youth listened to our communist speeches and said they were glad we were there, even people who disagreed with us. One young man in dread-locks told his friend, "That's it, that's the paper." Turned out he had been reading it on and off for years. A Latin youth gave us $5 for DESAFIO. A student told us he would print the PLP leaflet in his school newspaper. Although the Nazis were allowed to plug their loudspeakers into the Indiana State Capitol Building, the cops prevented CHALLENGE sellers from entering the rally site with our literature.

This particular group of fascists had organized among disaffected young people here for months. They advanced a strong anti-immigrant message both here and in Berwyn, Illinois in June, where PLP-led forces beat down several Nazi supporters. The anti-immigrant message is one that the fascists and capitalist ruling class have always used, but have intensified since Sept. 11, leading to dire consequences for the working class. People of Middle Eastern/South Asian/Arab descent have borne the brunt of anti-immigrant attacks, as have Latin immigrants. The capitalists benefit from these racist divisions among the working class, fueled by the Nazis as well as mainstream politicians. The bosses lay off workers and shut down plants and then get workers to blame each other for what the bosses have done.

Since 9/11, the U.S. government has forced all immigrants from certain countries to report to the Immigration Service. Thousands have been held and/or deported in this racist

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$87 BILLION FOR WARS WHILE RACIST UNEMPLOYMENT RAGES ON

A funny thing happened to George W. Bush on his way back from the aircraft carrier where he announced the end of the major fighting in Iraq. UN headquarters in Baghdad was destroyed, police headquarters was attacked and more GI's have been killed since Bush's Hollywood theatrics than before. In Iraq, thousands are protesting in the streets, the lights aren't working, the oil isn't paying for the occupation and rebuilding of Iraq, and apparently Islamic terrorists are tripping over themselves to join Saddam's Ba'athist remnants to "bring it on" to U.S. imperialism. Meanwhile, Bush's "road map to peace" was torn to shreds in an explosion of suicide bombers and Sharon's missiles. And the Taliban and al Qaeda's holy warriors are back in control of chunks of Afghanistan.

Gen. Anthony C. Zinni, former chief of the U.S. Central Command, the headquarters for U.S. military operations in Iraq and the Middle East said, "There is no strategy or mechanism for putting the pieces together. We're in danger of failing." (Washington Post, 9/5)

On top of this, the U.S. economy is plagued by soaring deficits,two days before Bush's speech another 93,000 jobs disappeared. U.S. troops and their families are less than enthusiastic and the F.B.I. is warning that more terrorist attacks may not be far off. "mission accomplished" is starting to look more like "mission impossible."

Against this backdrop, Bush went on TV September 7, to start his search for an additional $87 BILLION to continue the occupation of Iraq. With hat in hand, the "Go-It-Alone" gang is on its way back to the U.N. as well as to old Saddam Ba'ath army members who want to rebuild a security force.

According to the New York Times (editorial, 9/8), "Washington has been compelled to recognize that it cannot succeed in securing Iraq alone and badly needs much more United Nations help. Yet the White House still resists paying the necessary price of accepting broad U.N. authority over rebuilding Iraq's institutions and economy.... Realistic negotiations are needed with France, Germany and Russia over the terms of a new Security Council resolution that could open the door to expanded international peacekeeping forces and financial help with the huge reconstruction costs that lie ahead."

This is what was at the heart of the squabble among the bosses before the invasion, whether to create a U.S. empire by ruling alone, or whether to lead a World War 2 FDR-style "grand alliance" except this time with France, Germany, Russia and the U.N. The main wing of the U.S. ruling class is regaining the upper hand in this fight, but that's only half the battle.

At least as important is the fact that Bush has failed to win the working class, inside and outside the armed forces, to sacrifice for Exxon Mobil's oil profits. "While Mr. Bush is getting more specific about the numbers, he has yet to really tell Americans that they will have to make sacrifices to pay the bill." (NYT, 9/8) The main wing of the ruling class is pushing hard to win the population to a sense of duty and sacrifice so that U.S. imperialism can kill millions more in unending wars to keep the profits flowing. The Bush bashing will escalate to a fever pitch up until the 2004 presidential elections, but workers should beware the siren's song.

On October 25, there will be a mass March on Washington to End the Occupation of Iraq. Like the King-Dream march last August and the upcoming Immigrant's Freedom Ride, the main wing of the ruling class is hoping to use the anti-racist, anti-imperialist sentiments of the masses and lead them to the voting booth. Through the Democratic Party and the unions, the churches and community organizations, campus and student groups, they hope to mobilize the working class to support their deadly plans.

On our jobs, in our schools, communities and barracks, we should begin mobilizing for this march to challenge the rulers for the political leadership of the masses. By mobilizing our co-workers and students to participate under the political leadership of PLP, we can have a big impact on the march and those we bring to it, helping to energize the movement for communist revolution.✪

EDITORIAL: 'Freedom Ride' Ploy to Win Immigrants as Cannon-fodder

The "Immigrant Workers Freedom Ride" is a campaign conceived by the liberal wing of the U.S. ruling class to win the "hearts and minds" of millions of immigrant workers and others to a more inclusive patriotism. It's organized by a coalition of unions, business, churches, students and Democratic and Republican officials. Patriotism is central to winning the population to willingly sacrifice "blood and treasure" for the U.S. bosses' wars for world domination and control of oil. Patriotism is also crucial for implementing the fascist Homeland Security.

But 11 million undocumented workers — the coalition's estimate — cannot feel patriotic when they are excluded from citizenship. Neither can their millions of U.S.-born children and relatives nor the legal residents who resent anti-immigrant bashing.

The liberal U.S. bosses think this must change because "...hard-working, taxpaying immigrant workers cannot become full participants in this country without a national commitment to legalization." ("United We Serve: National Service and the Future of Citizenship," published by the Brookings Institute, a liberal bosses' think-tank) Their Freedom Ride coalition proclaims: "The goal of the Immigrant Workers Freedom Ride is to help draw a new map to the road to citizenship."

Immigrant workers and their U.S.-born children are a substantial part of the U.S. population, comprising 40% or more in major cities like Los Angeles and Miami. They also play a key role in industries from agriculture to services to manufacturing. Now U.S. rulers need to integrate them more aggressively into the military.

Since the end of the Cold War, the U.S. bosses' position as the world's number one imperialist power is increasingly being challenged. Both Republican and Democrat officials openly state that the U.S. must crush that opposition. Military supremacy with its huge expenditures and control of Middle Eastern oil are crucial to their strategy. This means war and more war.

But the U.S. military is already stretched thin. Anger is growing as GI's face stiffening resistance in Iraq and Afghanistan. The liberal U.S. rulers are calling for "more boots on the ground" to control Iraq's oil and to expand the fight for U.S. domination of the Middle East. Where will these soldiers come from?

One source is the millions of undocumented workers they're planning to "legalize," the millions to whom they'll grant citizenship and millions more of their sons and daughters. The vast majority are Latin Americans. Statistics show that the group currently most willing to "re-up" is Latino males. "United We Serve" suggests that "National service...could be part of a renewed discussion about the need to acknowledge the contributions immigrants make to American society. Why not make a two-year commitment to national service one pathway to legalization? Union leaders and employers together could identify eligible current and future workers for screening by appropriate authorities." (p.85)

National Service is the liberal bosses' program to move the U.S. population to "civic action," to sacrifice for the "national interest" like serving in the military and in Homeland Security. "National service is essential to democratic citizenship," states "United We Serve." It also suggests that 3.8 million felons could become full citizens again by completing two years of national service, yet another ploy to force mainly black workers, victimized by the bosses' racist cops and injustice system, to serve in the military and Homeland Security.

Even if all demands for immigrant workers were met, they would not be freer in the "land of opportunity." Almost 50% of all Latino families live below the official poverty level and earn the lowest wages. Many lack medical care. This is the future U.S. bosses have in store for all U.S. workers.

Under the guise of demanding "good things" for undocumented workers, the union hacks and politicians (who were the most virulent anti-immigrant spokespersons), are trying to seduce immigrant workers and their well-meaning supporters into goose-stepping for the U.S. bosses and fighting their imperialist wars. We should not fall into this trap. Patriotism is an ideology invented by capitalism to serve its needs for war and fascism. Workers owe allegiance to no boss and no country.

The working class has no borders which is another capitalist invention to stake out the territories and pit workers who they control and exploit against each other. Our interest lies in unifying the international working class under one flag, one Party and one political line in order to overthrow this racist murderous system and build a communist society based on serving the needs of our class. We will participate in the Freedom Ride to urge participants to join PLP and fight to end the profit system and its exploitation of all workers. We are confident that immigrants and their children who are pushed into national service will be won to fight against the bosses' imperialist war and fascist homeland security and for communist revolution.✪

Kissinger's 9/11: '73 Coup in Chile

Early in August, the leadership of the CUT (Labor Federation) organized a general strike here in Chile, but in a way that wouldn't really affect the interests of the ruling class. On TV, Martínez, head of the CUT, said the strike wasn't against the government but against the "economic model" imposed on workers and the companies that were taking advantage of it to attack the working class. Martínez exposed himself as a class traitor and a liar since the government supports the economic model. No wonder the working class is confused and demoralized.

September 11 is also a sad day for workers and their allies here in Chile. Three decades ago on that day a group of terrorists trained and backed by the U.S. ruling class caused the murder of thousands [and the torture of hundreds of thousands]. No, it wasn't Osama bin Laden and his al Qaeda fundamentalists trained by the CIA and its Saudi and Pakistani buddies to wage anti-communist jihad against the Soviet army in Afghanistan. This time the terrorists were anti-communist Christian fundamentalists led by Chilean General Pinochet, the Christian Democratic Party of Chile, right-wing Cuban exiles from Miami and other fascists.

They were all directed and financed by the CIA and Henry Kissinger (Richard Nixon's National Security chief and soon-to-become his Secy. of State). The coup overthrew the democratically-elected government of socialist President Salvador Allende. Among the murdered were some U.S. citizens (as depicted in the movie "Missing" starring Jack Lemon). It was just prior to this coup that Kissinger had observed he saw no reason why "a certain country" [Chile] should be allowed to "go Communist due to the irresponsibility of its own people." (Harper's Magazine, Feb. 2001)

Pinochet and Kissinger are still around and haven't paid for their terrorist crimes. Lagos, Chile's current President, is a right-wing "socialist." He's not even interested in pro-working class reforms as was Allende. Rather he's one of Bush's best allies in the Southern Cone.

The "far left" from Allende's time has also changed. In the pre-coup years, The Movement of the Revolutionary Left (MIR), was the biggest and most militant group. Pinochet's fascist secret police (DINA) killed MIR's leader, Miguel Enríquez in a shootout a year or so after the coup. Now the "new" MIR doesn't mention workers' power or even revolutionary socialism. It defends liberal diversity and multi-culturalism. Some of the "old MIR's" former leaders want the group to disband, saying "things have changed." Enríquez's son is now senior partner of a production company. I heard him recently on TV; he sounded like an up-and-coming CEO.

All these politicians and sellouts are now just interested in making sure capitalism functions smoothly without the disruptions of the Allende or Pinochet era. Political marketing is now their MO. Meanwhile, conditions for most workers are going from bad to worse, as the general strike showed, despite the CUT leaders' treachery. *Comrade in the Southern Cone*

Cops Protect Fellow Nazis

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round-up. Yet not one member of a racist militia group was subject to this kind of treatment after one of their members blew up the Oklahoma City Federal Building, killing 167. Racism will never be ended as long as capitalism exists, and capitalism will never be destroyed if we don't fight racism. That's why PLP continues to lead the attack against racism in all its forms, and is always there when the Klan and Nazis come to town.

After the demonstration, the police led the crowd on a circuitous route, using their horses and tactical teams to divide the anti-racists into smaller groups, leading many to see more clearly the racist purpose of the Klan in Blue. Our task is to channel the enthusiastic spirit of these and other young people into the building of a mass revolutionary PLP which can end this racist capitalist system once and for all.✪

WHAT WE FIGHT FOR:

✪PLP fights to smash capitalism—wage slavery. While the bosses and their mouthpieces claim "communism is dead," capitalism is the real failure for billions all over the world. The Soviet Union and China returned to capitalism because socialism maintained too many aspects of capitalism, like wages and divisions of labor.

✪Capitalism inevitably leads to wars. PLP organizes workers, students and soldiers to turn these wars into a revolution for communism. This fight for the dictatorship of the proletariat requires a mass Red Army led by the communist PLP.

✪Communism means working collectively to build a society where sharing is based on need. We will abolish work for wages, money and profit. Everyone will share society's benefits and burdens.

✪Communism means abolishing racism and the concept of race.

✪Communism means abolishing the special oppression of women workers.

✪Communism means abolishing nations and nationalism. One international working class, one world, one Party.

✪Communism means the Party leads every aspect of society. For this to work, millions of workers — eventually everyone — must become communist organizers.

JOIN US!

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Voting Can't End Capitalism's Racist Nightmare

WASHINGTON, D.C., Aug. 23 — Today thousands of anti-racists marched to commemorate the 40th anniversary of the 1963 March on Washington, considered a turning point in the civil rights struggle. It was marked by Martin Luther King, Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" speech, and, combined with the militant black rebellions of the 1960s, led to the passage of civil rights legislation. Today's march organizers were launching a voter registration movement to kick out Bush and the Republicans as the way to stop increasing racist attacks.

In contrast to this official "vote Democrat" line, PLP organized for this event around revolutionary ideas, pointing to capitalism as the source of racism, calling for a mass, violent revolution against the profit system. Fighting racism is central to such a movement. We distributed thousands of flyers and hundreds of CHALLENGES at Howard University and the surrounding community, exposing the losing strategy of relying on the bosses' politicians.

Today we marched from Howard U. to the Lincoln Memorial assembly point with the By Any Means Necessary movement, which recently had organized major protests at the Supreme Court against the attack on affirmative action. Our banners and slogans were very popular with other marchers as our militant contingent joined the protesters on the Mall.

Another PLP contingent joined with the People's Coalition for Police Accountability in circulating a petition and leaflet demanding the firing and indictment of racist Prince George's County cop Charles Ramseur, who shot an unarmed young black man in the back, paralyzing him for life. Over 250 marchers signed the petition. Hundreds more flyers and CHALLENGES were distributed.

PLP's militant, grassroots, revolutionary strategy contrasted with the ineffective and misleading electoral strategy of the event's speakers. A great number of marchers were open to revolutionary, militant ideas, similar to the 1963 march.

In 1963, the Democratic Party, the Kennedy's and the unions, which used their funding to control the agenda of the major civil rights organizations, toned down the politics of the march. Mainstream civil rights leaders like King accepted this situation because of their limited reformist politics.

The leadership of that march rewrote the speech of John Lewis, then leader of the more militant SNCC (Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee), to keep the speeches free of any revolutionary spirit. Ironically, on that very day, Kennedy signed legislation passed by the Democratic-controlled Congress breaking a nationwide railroad strike.

Malcolm X labeled the event the "Farce on Washington." He declared that the mass of black workers and youth were militant and revolutionary, saying the '63 march could have been a pre-revolutionary activity, sparking militant actions to shut down the country. He argued that this movement had been hijacked and derailed by the Liberal Establishment's control of the main civil rights organizations.

PLP hails the bold spirit of the 1963 marchers and identifies with the anti-racist, activist spirit of today's participants. We supported the militant black rebellions in the 1960s as the way to go. (PLP members were arrested and accused of being behind the 1964 Harlem Rebellion.) But the mis-leadership of this current movement is still trying to co-opt our brothers and sisters into dangerous electoral and legislative traps. Act to spread revolutionary ideas within the mass movement so that racism can finally be crushed with communist revolution!✪

Building a Revolutionary Party:
Make Communism the Voice of the People

Communists aim to become tribunes of the people, particularly the working class. Making communism the voice of the workers has been a challenge at this large healthcare institution. Years ago we began with one organizer advancing the outlook of building a mass PLP and making CHALLENGE a newspaper read by, and speaking for, thousands of workers here. That remains a difficult goal, but progress has been made and lessons have been learned.

Base-building is the key ingredient. Developing close personal/political ties with many workers, built around CHALLENGE and leadership of class struggle, has led to several black and Latin workers joining the Party, and an expanded CHALLENGE circulation. Being socially and politically involved with the workers raises everyone's morale and enriches our "personal" lives while building the Party.

In the early days, Party organizing was based mainly on socializing with workers at lunch, after work, in bridal and baby showers, funerals, cabarets, picnics, sporting events, alcohol and drug abuse interventions and exploring other opportunities to build solid ties with the workers as we gained confidence in each other.

After years of struggle, our CHALLENGE distribution dramatically improved when we recruited a black worker who made this her mission. She helped recruit another black worker and they led a struggle to increase CHALLENGE circulation. CHALLENGE is the thread that ties together our base-building and class-struggle fights.

Years of communist activity in the union involves us in almost all aspects of the workers' fights: grievances, contract negotiations, organizing and participating in marches on personnel and CEO offices. In 2002 we linked the fight against the Iraq war to the bosses' effort to take back our pay raise. During that fight, non-Party workers boldly posted PLP flyers everywhere. ["Fight all OIL WAR cuts! Fight for Communism!"] PLP members and our base have been continuously at the heart of almost every struggle.

Now workers want to know what the Party thinks on almost every question affecting them. We have friendly relations with a broad spectrum of workers — from ex-Marine Corps sergeants to members of the Nation of Islam. A recent hiring wave of part-timers brought in many younger workers. Many veteran workers have introduced them to the PLP delegate. Our most immediate task is recruiting and developing these younger black, Latin and women workers.

An important part of our plan will be to link the bosses' endless oil wars to the fights on the job. Our August PLP newsletter exposed how the billions of tax dollars spent on the bosses' military could provide healthcare for virtually the entire working class. Future CHALLENEGE articles will describe our experience in pursuing these goals.✪

Internationalism Elects PLP Steward

Cleaners in an SEIU local elected a PLP member for shop steward this August. These workers come from many different nations — Mexico, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Ethiopia, Somalia, etc. Many fled from economic and political oppression caused by U.S. imperialism, only to face anti-immigrant racism here. A supervisor physically assaulted a Somali worker, sparking a grievance against this racist pig. Somali workers are singled out for racist attack because they're Muslims in the post-9/11 U.S.

The workers who are regular CHALLENGE readers played a big role in getting our comrade elected. Many papers are distributed at this job. We are trying to reach as many international workers as possible. While electing a PLP member is good, the best response to the racism and wars of capitalism is for many of these workers to join PLP and to bring our revolutionary communist politics to their friends and relatives, from San Salvador to Mogadishu to Chicago to NYC to Managua.

The only way we will get justice for our class and an end to racist oppression is through communist revolution.

A Comrade

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U.S. 'Democracy' Hits Iraq — Arrest Jobless Marchers

Baghdad, Iraq—At a protest last month, workers demand jobs from U.S. occupation forces.

On July 29, hundreds of unemployed workers, led by the Union of the Unemployed (UOTU), marched to the office of the U.S. puppet Governing Council to demand jobs and unemployment benefits. The UOTU is Iraq's fastest growing labor organization. At least four million Iraqi workers are unemployed in a country of 25 million (equal to 46 million unemployed in the U.S.). They erected a tent encampment outside the council's gates, and refused to disperse as U.S. troops had ordered. At 1:00 A.M. the troops attacked the workers and arrested 21, including Union leader, Kacem Madi.

The UOTU says it will continue its demonstrations. One arrested Union member, Ali Djaafri, 58, said his experience was "very humiliating. At no other time during the occupation has my resentment towards the U.S. soldiers been that strong."

Millions of Iraqi workers are facing extreme poverty brought on by the Bush gang's pre-emptive invasion. Many used to provide vital services like health and education, working for government-owned enterprises that have been closed down and slated for U.S.-directed privatization.

The Bush administration has given contracts to U.S. corporations with long anti-labor records. All have fought unions and 8 of the 18 have no unions. They include Stevedoring Services of America, which helped lock out the West Coast longshoremen last year, and MCI Worldcom, which used bankruptcy and fraudulent records to wipe out retirement savings for thousands of their workers, along with $2.6 billion in public pension funds.

Haliburton's Kellogg, Brown and Root are using subcontractors that bring their own workforce into Basra for repairs and reconstruction while experienced Iraqi workers are frozen out. The head of the International Confederation of Arab Trade Unions declared, "War makes privatization easy: first you destroy the society and then you let the corporations rebuild it."

When Bush, Rumsfeld and "presstitutes" like the New York Times' Thomas Friedman talk about "bringing democracy to Iraq," they mean the capitalist brand that criminalizes workers demonstrating against unemployment.

Workers everywhere should support their Iraqi brothers and sisters. We should raise the issue in our unions and hold protest actions at federal buildings.

Prior to the CIA-engineered coup in 1963, which later brought Saddam Hussein to power, Iraq had a vibrant communist-led labor movement. Iraqi workers have a long history of supporting communist politics. However, the Iraqi Communist Party has long since become a reactionary force, even joining the U.S.-puppet Iraqi Governing Council. We don't know the politics of UOTU's leadership, but Iraqi workers must rebuild the revolutionary communist movement to fight the U.S.-UK occupation forces, Hussein's Ba'athists, Islamic fundamentalists and all imperialists. This Herculean task is the only way out of the endless bloodbath spreading across the Middle East. It is the only way the international working class will be able to eventually destroy the war criminals in the White House and Wall Street and establish a worker-run communist society, free of profits and bosses.✪

China's Capitalist 'Success' Rooted In Slave Wages for Millions

In 1971, China's Mao-Zedong wined, dined and starting doing business with Kissinger and Nixon, the so-called ping-pong diplomacy, so named because the deal-making was preceded by a "cultural exchange" involving competition between U.S. and Chinese ping pong teams. CHALLENGE said it opened the doors to capitalism in China and called it a tremendous betrayal of the international working class, particularly those in Vietnam who were being bombed "back to the stone age" by U.S. bosses.

Many attacked us, saying "how dare PLP criticize Mao and the Chinese communists," but history has proven us correct. China is fast becoming the manufacturing center of world capitalism. The Boston-based New Balance company now manufactures 6 million pairs of shoes — 60% of its total annual production — in China.

U.S. Treasury Secretary Snow just visited Beijing to pressure the government to "float" its currency, the yuan, which is now pegged to the dollar and was told, "Tough luck!" The Chinese bosses know well that a low-valued yuan, combined with the super-exploitation of Chinese workers, are enabling profits in what they call "market socialism" — capitalism — to bloom.

Some companies like healthcare giant Johnson & Johnson, Wal-Mart, and Ikea are riding the Chinese boom while others are being left behind, particularly the Southern-based textile industry and some smaller scrap metal outfits. Cheap imports from China are hurting these industries, causing mass layoffs here. Even should China float its currency, increasing its value, it will still have a major weapon: the world's largest pool of low-paid workers. The Wall Street Journal (9/4) says this is the main threat "not only [to] manufacturers in the U.S., but also those in Mexico, Eastern Europe and elsewhere in Asia."

Mexico's maquiladora industry is being hit hard. China's super-exploitation of labor, coupled with the world economic crisis and its damaging effect on the U.S. market — which has consequently decreased its imports from Mexico — has led to the loss of 250,000 jobs in Mexico in the last 12 months.

Ironically, by not "floating" the yuan, China's bosses are helping to keep the U.S. economy afloat. China's huge trade deficit with the U.S. and its consequent accumulation of dollars has led China to buy U.S. treasury bills, "helping the savings-short U.S. economy [to] keep spending and investing, and keeps U.S. long-term interest rates from rising."(WSJ)

But capitalism, even "market-socialism" style, has its limits. Already, China's capitalism is "overheating," mainly in the banking and housing business. (New York Times, 9/4)

Eventually the deal-making diplomacy which betrayed the Vietnamese workers fighting U.S. imperialism, will turn into a trade war and another shooting war. This is the nature of the capitalist beast, whether labeled free market, globalization or "market socialism." Our job is to rebuild the international communist movement, from Beijing to Detroit, learning from the strengths and mistakes of the old movement, and fight for a world without any capitalists. Join the PLP!✪

Heat Deaths = Capitalist Murder

The recent heat wave in Paris and other European cities was the worst in decades. But it wasn't just uncomfortable. It was deadly. The media focused primarily on France where literally thousands of "excess" deaths occurred, meaning death rates were much higher than usual.

The exact figures for this public health catastrophe have been hard to come by. First estimates were between 1,500 and 3,000 deaths. The most recent estimate, based on funeral home reports, is over 13,000.

Most deaths occurred among older people, from their 70's to 90's. Some were living alone, without air conditioning. But one report suggests that half of these deaths occurred among nursing home residents. What are we to make of such a catastrophe occurring in a developed country at the beginning of the 21st century?

Heat death is common in many countries. Every summer in the U. S., for example, some older people die from hyperthermia (extreme elevation of body temperature). Numbers vary, depending on how bad heat waves are in various cities.

But heat death is completely preventable. With adequate hydration (i.e., drinking enough liquids) and cooling, no one has to die from hyperthermia.

The technical knowledge exists to prevent these deaths. But capitalism fails to provide the basic living conditions — the right kind of housing, air conditioning, social supports, and emergency medical services — that could prevent thousands of hyperthermia deaths each year.

Yes, sometimes it gets hot. The question is, when this happens what do the bosses' governments do to ensure that older people, living alone or in nursing homes, get the fluid and cooling they need? And you can bet that in France few of these older persons came from society's upper echelons. They were likely to be retired workers, shopkeepers or farmers. The ruling class takes care of its own, even in the worst of "natural" heat waves.

Government officials hypocritically blamed families and doctors for going on vacation. Everyone knows that a large percentage of French people take long vacations in August — vacations, incidentally, that workers fought for. So how come provisions weren't made to increase hospital staffing and monitor conditions in nursing homes? How come the public health system didn't make arrangements to look in on older people living alone?

The fact is, under capitalism these elementary preventive measures are not high priorities. In their absence, when extreme "natural" conditions occur (heat waves, earthquakes, floods), people die.

Over 150 years ago, communist leader and theoretician Frederick Engels described the early deaths faced by Irish and other workers in the early 19th Century as "social murder." The heat deaths in France and other developed countries are another example of social murder. The profit-hungry bosses have caused these deaths just as surely as if they had sent these older workers to gas chambers or bombed their nursing homes.

Capitalism has a long, miserable history of failing to protect workers against natural disasters. The best "public health" measure to prevent social murder is communist revolution. Under communism, older workers will not die alone — dehydrated, disoriented and burning up in apartments and nursing homes. Communism can and will provide housing conditions with built-in, round-the-clock social supports so that heat death becomes one more atrocity of the past.✪

Chicago County Hospitals are Really Sick

Chicago, IL, Sept. 9 — Since the Members First reform slate was elected to lead SEIU Local 73 Health Care Workers Union last July, management has been testing the strength of this new leadership.

In the County Hospital system, the bosses are taking workers to pre-disciplinary hearings and firing people for being sick or making work errors that result from working under-staffed and under stress. Meanwhile, many vacant positions go unfilled, slated to be eliminated at the end of this budget year. Many workers who recently retired under the Early Retirement Initiative have not been replaced. Instead the bosses use Temporary and Agency workers. Favoritism is used in making promotions. Union members are in an uphill struggle trying to protect the few rights we have in our contract.

Mt. Sinai Hospital defaulted on its mortgage payment and laid off the engineers in favor of a sub-contractor. When workers marched on the boss and explained how they had dedicated their working life to this hospital, the CEO replied, "You were paid well for that work."

At the brand new Stroger Hospital (formerly Cook County Hospital), patients wait for days in the emergency room until a bed is available or they are transferred to Oak Forest or Provident, far from where most of them live. Many are stressed out from waiting so long and some have psychological issues. There are too few beds for medicine and surgery patients. Many patients must wait overly long in the recovery area because their beds were given to someone else while they were in surgery.

The Pharmacy often runs out of medications. Patients are sometimes discharged without their medications, forcing them to go to a drugstore and pay full price — which they can't afford — which is why they come to Stroger in the first place. Many patients wait in the Pharmacy 18 to 24 hours because they can't afford another round-trip carfare.

'We need more direct work actions instead of waiting weeks and months under the grievance system.'

Countless grievances are being filed, but capitalism can never meet the needs of unemployed, sick workers who have been used and abused by the system. While Bush seeks another $87 BILLION to tighten his oily grip on Iraq, County hospitals will always be understaffed and the union will always have more fights than it can possibly handle.

We need more direct work actions instead of waiting weeks and months under the grievance system. In the struggle for decent health care for our patients, a safe workplace and jobs that can provide for our families, we can help workers understand capitalism and learn how communism will provide jobs and health care for all. Several CHALLENGE readers are participating in PLP study groups. The union is one avenue through which workers can fight back under capitalism. PLP is the blueprint for the communist world that will provide for all workers' needs.✪

FROM THE FLINT SIT-DOWN TO UAW, INC.

FLINT, MI, Sept. 2 — The United Auto Workers (UAW) union unveiled a $350,000 monument commemorating the great Flint sit-down strike in which workers seized and occupied General Motors plants for 44 days and nights from December 1936 to February 1937. At the Labor Day ceremony, UAW President Gettelfinger described how the strike was preceded by more than a year of agitation and organization by "union activists," both inside and outside Flint, and called the historic strike "a watershed event…that paved the way for better wages, better working conditions and better lives…across the United States." (Oakland, Mich. Press, 9/2)

All too true. But this labor faker neglected to mention that the strike was led by communists. Six of the seven members of the in-plant Strike Committee were members of the Communist Party and the two "activists" leading the organizing outside the plants, Bob Travis and Wyndham Mortimer, were militant left-wingers closely associated with the communist leadership.

But the UAW turned into its opposite a long time ago. By the early 1940's, the Communist Party's own opportunist reformism made it easier for a pro-capitalist leadership to take over the UAW. Today, the "union" is more like UAW, Inc. As of March 31, 2003, the UAW had a net worth of $1.1 BILLION. The General Fund had a cash balance of $59.7 million and the International Union earned a total of $10.8 million on investments in the previous three months. The Strike Fund alone was worth almost $820 million.

"The Flint Sit-Down, which broke the laws and took on the cops and National Guard, sparked tremendous growth in a time of severe economic crisis, organizing four million industrial workers in the next four years."

The Flint Sit-Down, which broke the laws and took on the cops and National Guard, sparked tremendous growth in a time of severe economic crisis, organizing four million industrial workers in the next four years. However, under generations of patriotic pro-capitalist junior partners, the UAW has lost 750,000 members since 1979 and today is trading wages and benefits in exchange for the bosses agreeing to sign "neutrality" clauses giving the union new members.

It's no wonder the pro-boss union leaders want to hide the leading role communists played in organizing basic industrial workers. This is one of the clearest examples that reform doesn't lead to revolution. As PLP expands our base among industrial workers, we will lead workers to go all the way and destroy this system of wage-slavery with communist revolution.

(See the PLP website, wwwPLP.org, for the complete text of the pamphlet, The Great Flint Sit-Down Strike Against GM.)✪

Politicians' Electoral Tricks Won't Solve Salvadoran Workers' Problems

EL SALVADOR — The capitalist crisis here has plunged the working class into a bottomless pit filled with unemployment, hunger, disease, desperation and death. This crisis is caused by the greedy murderous bosses in El Salvador as well as the international crisis of overproduction created by world capitalism. Coffee and cotton producers here can't find buyers because the market is shrinking and is filled by others. Privatization is intensifying which is part of the drive for maximum profits, creating still more unemployment and misery. The only thing keeping the economy somewhat afloat is the $2 billion Salvadoran immigrants in the U.S. send home.

Dominican Republic—Workers demonstrate against the constant black-out that make life even more miserable.

In the coming presidential election, both the candidates of the right-wing ARENA party and the liberals of the FMLN (Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front), say they can solve these problems. But until capitalism is destroyed, no matter who's in power, workers' problems will remain, under a system in which production is based on exploitation, and profits will continue to line the pockets of the bosses.

Shafik Handal, FLMN presidential candidate, says, "Capitalism has many good things to offer us. Only under a law of free competition can Salvadoran businesses develop better." This statement smacks of any common bourgeois politician. But Handal and the FMLN promise "revolutionary change" that will free the Salvadoran working class from capitalist super-exploitation.

Decades ago Handal, ex-leader of the now defunct Salvadoran Communist Party, rejected communism as the road to working-class liberation. He says we can take "good" things from capitalism to create a "third alternative system." But capitalist exploitation cannot be resolved by magic or politicians' tricks. Only a world run by the working class for our own class interests can free us from the evils of the profit system.

Handal hasn't stopped screaming to the four winds about the "benefits" of national capitalism and of the many friends the FMLN has among both the U.S. and European imperialists. With this outlook, the FMLN and Handal look for electoral alliances with right-wing parties like the PCN (Party of National Conciliation). In '70's and '80's the PCN "disappeared" and tortured thousands of city workers, farmworkers and students. With friends like this, the workers don't need enemies.

The political cynicism and opportunism of the MLN, the Sandinistas in Nicaragua, the Workers' Party of Lula in Brazil and Chavez in Venezuela are incapable of resolving the worsening problems of the working class. Much of this ideological retreat stems from the demise of the old communist movement led by the former Soviet Union and China, which fought for socialism. When these countries returned to open capitalism, it created disillusion and confusion among the world's workers. But if was capitalism that failed, not communism. The science and goal of communism continue to be the hope of millions of workers.

In El Salvador, the rest of Latin America and throughout the world, millions died fighting for a future without exploitation or capitalism. The mud thrown on them by people like Handal, Lula and Ortega will not stop the fight for real communist revolution.

Contrary to the electoral parties, PLP says that elections and reforms won't stop the bosses' fascist attacks and wars. Communists in PLP worldwide will intensify the exposure of these capitalist wolves in sheep's clothing and fight for the masses to take the future into our own hands, to destroy all capitalist exploiters along with their henchmen.✪

LETTERS

'The seeds of revolution are falling to earth all around us, in places we might not think of looking. Husbandmen [cultavtors] are needed, to nurture, weed and water. The fruit will appear.'

Bay Area Reader

Rulers' Lies Help Sicken 9/11'Heroes'

Sometimes truth sneaks into the bosses' media, especially local outlets. In this case, our Oakland channel interviewed the leaders of a well-known search-and-rescue squad from nearby Menlo Park. These guys (I think they're all firefighters) are trained and equipped to fly anywhere in the world to help in major earthquakes and such. Of course, they helped in the collapse of the World Trade Center.

Their leader said that since their return from 9/11, three-fourths of them are sick! He said at times he'll cough "like a 70-year-old with lung disease." Triggering this story was the announcement that the Bush administration ordered the EPA to say the air at Ground Zero was safe, when they knew it was anything but!

My point is, these are their best guys. These are their American Heroes. Even so, it means nothing to our rulers to lie outright, and consign them to possibly lingering deaths.

The reporter closed this sad story by asking the leader if he would ever again trust the government. "Never," he shot back.

PL should get to these guys. The seeds of revolution are falling to earth all around us, in places we might not think of looking. Husbandmen [cultavators] are needed, to nurture, weed and water. The fruit will appear.

Bay Area Reader

'Recruit Locally, Think Globally for Communism!'

This summer I visited a Middle-Eastern country and had discussions with some young people, ranging from the latest music and movies to politics. For the most part, these youth were very aware of their position as members of the working class.

During one discussion, I mentioned how people seemed to have more "material" possessions than on my last visit. One youth agreed — more cars, more televisions and clothes — but with these things had come car theft, home break-ins and muggings. When I asked how this could happen with all the police patrols, one young man replied, "The police are not here to protect us. They're here to protect the president and businesses and to put down any rebellion or demonstrations." A young woman agreed saying, "Yeah, one time when my parents called the cops because they thought a thief was breaking into a neighbor's home, the policeman's response was, 'Go check it out yourself.'" I noted that it must be a global job description for cops because it's the same in the U.S.

When discussing what must be changed, most thought it needed to be in the country's leadership. The current president has been in office since 1987, and has just announced that "for the good of the country, and in the interest of all citizens," he's "willing" to run for re-election next year.

When he first came to power. he said he'd only run for one term — four years. True to form, he's a liar like all politicians worldwide. I raised the idea that just changing presidents wouldn't be enough. A change in the system is needed. Capitalism is running things here. For things to get better for workers, capitalism must be destroyed.

When I asked what they thought of communism, one young man replied that communism had failed and doesn't work. I said it wasn't communism that had failed, it was capitalism that failed in those countries that were-called communist. Communist leaders have made errors in the past but communism is the only system that serves the interest of the working class. As evident in our daily lives, capitalism only serves the interest of the rulers.

Most agreed that capitalism didn't serve them, but another youth asked, "Why should I give up all I have so someone else could have something?" His friend asked, "What do you have to give up?" We all had to laugh at that, even the person who asked the original question. I added that capitalism gives us the illusion that we have so much, when in reality workers have very little or go into debt just to acquire a few things.

The conversation moved to the war in Iraq. Most understood that U.S. rulers want to control the region's oil. I agreed but added that U.S. rulers want world domination; control of oil is only one step towards that goal. They also want to control the olive groves in this country, and any other markets in their imperialist drive for world supremacy. Most agreed but admitted they hadn't thought of that before.

Interestingly, the question of Muslim fundamentalism never came up. The only time we talked about religion was when they asked me why I didn't believe in any religion. The ones I spoke to ranged from Muslims who go to the mosque every Friday to say their prayers to a few who didn't believe in God at all.

When I asked if we could stay in touch once I returned home, to talk more about change — maybe I could send them some literature — they all liked the idea of staying in contact, but not to discuss politics. They feared the government would read their mail or investigate them. I agreed we must be cautious, and if I could think of a way that would be safe I'd let them know. We exchanged E-mail and home addresses and promised to at least stay in contact to discuss music and movies.

On my return home, I thought more about how correct the Party's line is, that we need a worldwide movement for communism. The liberals say, "work locally, think globally." We need to recruit locally and build globally, for communism!

NY Red

Social Action on Church Calendar

I joined a church a year ago that has less than 200 members, is very active, is a bit conservative, but has members who are politically progressive. In working on a number of tasks I've made dozens of new friends and acquaintances. Some are quite close and take CHALLENGE. From among our church "small group" we've formed a separate bi-weekly discussion circle we call Think/Speak/Act (T/S/A) to which some others have come occasionally.

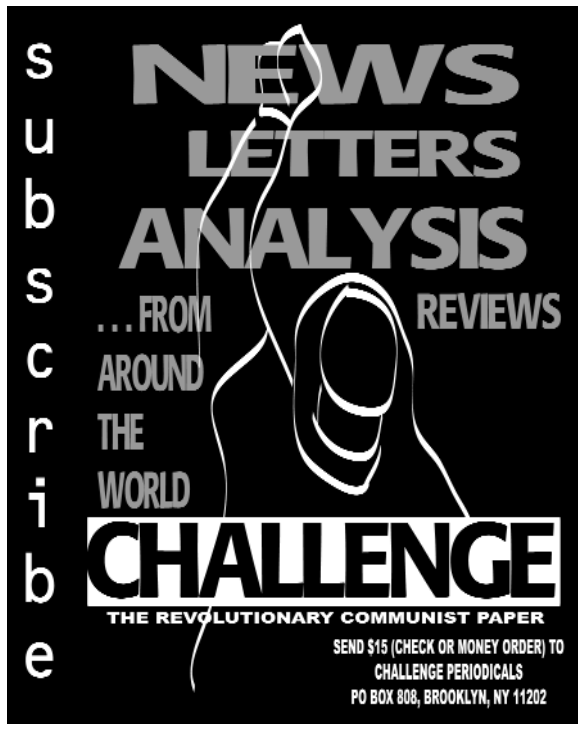
Though often focusing on theological topics, the discussions are often political. We usually connect the ideas with concrete problems which our neighbors face, many of whom are very poor. We hope to become the nucleus of a church committee to organize social action in our community.

Recently, after our "small group" studied the relationship between Christians and Jews, six members of the discussion circle attended a synagogue service to meet people there. Also, knowing that since 9/11 many Muslims have been targets of racist attacks, two of us attended a service at a local mosque where we met some of its members and leaders.

We're currently planning to "partner" with a family in or near our church that needs help at home. One member of T/S/A and I went to an anti-war rally in January, and recently watched the movie "Bowling for Columbine." He and I often discuss national and world politics.

Another close friend told me last Fall, before he knew I'm a communist, that on a trip 32 years ago to the Soviet Union he gained a new, clearer understanding of the slogan, "From each according to ability, to each according to need"! He said that while touring the countryside, a guide explained that the billboards they saw weren't advertising a product, but were signs praising the excellence or special effort of some nearby worker. He said this deeply impressed him. And although he recently told me, "I'm not a revolutionary," it's clear he has the spirit and desire for fundamental change that millions more will have in the future.

A Pennsylvania comrade



Racist LAPD To Use Licenses vs. Drivers

Some of us went to a rally sponsored by the unions and churches in downtown LA to support the right of immigrant workers, regardless of status, to have a driver's license. We sold many CHALLENGES to the hundreds present. But we were surprised that one of the main speakers was racist LA Police Chief Bratton, of "community policing" fame. He said that he and the LAPD favored this measure because it would help tremendously with law "enforcement." Not surprisingly, Gov. Davis supported it also. Then the California Legislature passed a law allowing all immigrants to obtain driver's licenses. While such a license is a necessity. it also helps locate people for the bosses.

A reader

School Bosses' Job: Control Discontent

I'm active in my union and write a summary of the monthly city meetings which I distribute to the members at my school. I wrote the following letter in response to a disagreement with my statement that the administration doesn't fight for education.

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Thanks for your comment. It's nice to have some feedback on these reports.... One reason I issue these comments is to get people to think about what's going on and why, and to get a dialogue going.

I agree with you . . . that the administrators of this school work very hard (but certainly not [at] every school) but only in the limited way you mean it, not in the bigger picture that I meant.

Individual school administrators (such as ours) may work very hard within the limits set up by the school district, but these limits of money and personnel insure that we can't meet the needs of teachers and students.

We need a lot more time, money, personnel and resources to do that and to deal with the issues confronting our students. Sufficient resources will only come...when a big campaign is waged to force the school district to do it. Even then, other schools will begin to make demands on the school district, which it will not be able to meet within the limits...[set] by the government. This campaign, then, must take on a bigger scope — a state and national reprioritization of resources. The whole system will have to be radically changed to put people first.

My point is that people (even if well-meaning) are limited by the resources the system allocates to schools (and to other human services...). A campaign is necessary to increase those allocated resources.

"Leaders" who do not lead this struggle (and this especially includes union "leaders") are providing a disservice to the people they are "supposed" to lead.

Union leaders "should" be playing this role. However, the role of the Administration is expressly not to play this role.... Their job is to control the discontent, not lead the struggle to meet the needs of the discontented.

Thanks for your response,
A union activist

Liberals Let Bush Off Hook

People who think voting for liberals will solve their problems should ponder this: Democrats claim they were against Bush's help-the-rich tax cuts. Now Bush is asking Congress for $87 billion more deficit as things go wrong in Iraq. But not a single Democrat says, "O.K., if you want the money, repeal the fat-cat tax cuts."

Why no such logical demand? Because they're all part of a government by profiteers — capitalism.

Ancient Red

A Taste of Communist Struggle

SEATTLE, WA., Sept. 5 — "Last time I came here was in '99," said a young student, a machinist trainee, at our monthly Party study group. "There were many more workers driving into the Boeing plants, a lot with big pick-ups. There aren't so many workers now, but they're more interested. I got out all of my [communist] leaflets and had only one CHALLENGE left." This young student joined a few out-of-town guests and over twenty workers and students — members and friends, many in mass organizations of one kind or another — for a continuing discussion on the PLP documents Road to Revolution III and IV in the middle of our 4-day, end-of-summer, mini-project. "Yeah, he was bold!" added a newer comrade in admiration.

This session focused on the lessons of the Russian Revolution. Two new leaders prepared a "time line" of the revolution so all would have the facts at hand. Veteran comrades added additional historical information. Then a co-leader of the youth club asked everyone to name at least one positive thing and one weakness about that historic event.

The struggle intensified. Will the racist, imperialist media determine the ideology of the working class? ...Or will CHALLENGE and bringing our communist politics to class struggle ultimately carry the day? Which is primary: what the bosses do or what we do? What are the limits of struggle today and what will determine the ultimate direction of history? What type of organization should we build: a revolutionary communist party based on class politics or a collection of nationalist organizations allied around identity politics? Should we really focus on industrial workers and soldiers, as the Bolsheviks did?

We tried to answer these questions in practice. We distributed three hundred copies of the most recent Boeing CHALLENGE article at the plant gates and within the factory. The ensuing discussions with workers reminded us of the importance of a broad communist presence at all times, not just at contract time or during union elections. We followed up the next day selling papers and leafleting to soldiers and their families. Some GI's took papers and leaflets to distribute in the barracks, arranging to stay in contact. The last day we visited Boeing workers and others interested in the Party. All told, we sold over 200 copies of the latest CHALLENGE (during the project and the two weeks proceeding) and distributed hundreds more communist flyers to soldiers, students and Boeing workers.

Everyone liked the project, including the late-night social activities. The project served to "whet the appetite" for more communist struggle. Dare to Struggle, Dare to Win!✪

Bronson's 'Death Wish' Movies Reinforce Rulers' Racism

Charles Bronson, who died on August 30, was best known for his five (!) "Death Wish" movies. Along with the Clint Eastwood "Dirty Harry" series, these films were part of the conservative backlash against the legal reforms of the 1960's, in which criminal suspects were afforded some minimal protection, at least on paper if not always in practice. (The 1966 Supreme Court Miranda decision is probably the best known.)

Such movies were the cultural expressions of this right-wing backlash. They argued that those arrested ("probably guilty" anyway, they claimed) had "too many rights," that the police were being handcuffed in their efforts to protect the public, and therefore crime was rising. Bronson's character is a liberal businessman who sees his wife and daughter raped (his wife dies), and decides to take matters into his own hands when the police can't solve the crime.

To avoid the charge of racism, the rapists and criminals in "Death Wish" are mostly white. But sales of the book that the film was based on skyrocketed because of the movie's popularity. Written by a third-rate novelist, Brian Garfield, the book is thoroughly racist. The criminals in the book, including those who attack the wife and daughter, are black or Latino. The white businessman assassinates a series of low-level street criminals, not the original attackers. The novel's main character, really a neo-Nazi, is sympathetically portrayed. He looks around at the people on a NYC subway car and thinks half of them should be physically eliminated.

In the novel's last pages, taking place in Harlem at night, the protagonist murders a young black boy whose crime (get ready for this) was throwing rocks at a passing subway train. He then turns around and sees a white cop staring at him. The cop has witnessed the murder, but the murderer can't bring himself to shoot the officer ("we're on the same side"). Then the cop turns his back, in a show of solidarity with the racist murder. End of novel.

There are far more effective movies with the same theme, that the police should be allowed to use brutal methods to bring criminals to justice. In my opinion, the most skillful is "L.A. Confidential," set in the 1950's. Russell Crowe plays the thuggish Bud White, who murders an unarmed black man without losing the affection of the audience because he is rescuing a Mexican woman who has been raped and tied up. Guy Pearce is the officer who wants to play by the rules and seeks to clean up the corrupt, racist L.A. police force. Ultimately, he is won over to Bud White's strong-arm tactics, but it's "acceptable" because the target now is no longer black males but the corrupt, murderous white police officials and D.A.

The movie is well-acted and brilliantly directed, and wants us to believe that the new L.A. police will combine both brains and respect for the law (the Pearce character) with necessary force (Crowe), and that's what the public wants and needs. Even though the black characters in the movie are innocent of the diner murders of which they're accused, they're guilty of the rape and so the audience shouldn't mind when the law-abiding Pearce and the thuggish Crowe combine to blow them away without the annoyance of a trial. Support for racism and fascist police tactics have reached higher artistic heights than the now, largely forgotten, "Death Wish" movies.

A Comrade

RED EYE ON THE NEWS

BELOW ARE EXCERPTS FROM MAINSTREAM NEWSPAPERS THAT CONTAIN IMPORTANT INFORMATION:Abbreviations: NYT=New York Times, GW=Guardian Weekly (UK)

28% pay cut for less-skilled

The real problem is what has happened to the least skilled — and least paid — workers. From 1979 to 2001, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the real earnings of men without high school diplomas fell by a horrifying 28%. For women, whose pay was already lower, the decline was still 9%. (NYT, 9/7)

Greed system must be smashed

The Triangle Waist Company fire…killed 146 garment workers on the afternoon of March 25, 1911…. As David Von Drehle makes clear in his outstanding history, "Triangle," the overwhelmingly young, female victims of the fire — at least 123 were women, and of these at least 64 were teenagers — were betrayed by the greed of their employers….

Girls who worked 84 hours a week for as little as $7 were immolated because their bosses kept stairway doors locked to prevent theft….

The fire followed close on the heels of "The Uprising of the 20,000," an epic four-month strike….

The shop owners tried to crush them by hiring pimps and prostitutes to attack their picket lines, "as a way of saying that the strikers were no better than whores themselves." The police, controlled by the owners' allies in Tammany Hall, then arrested the strikers for disturbing the peace, roughed them up and hauled them before Tammany magistrates who fired and jailed them….

One of the factories…was the Triangle, whose owners, Max Blanck and Isaac Harris, had led the resistance to the strike….

The booming new business of ready-to-wear clothes….turned on the smallest efficiencies and on "sweating" every cent out of labor costs.

One of these efficiencies was arson. Everywhere that Blanck and Harris went, fire seemed to follow — four of them between 1902 and 1910, at three different locations….

They did not start the fatal blaze that March 25, but as Von Drehle points out, the need to burn off excess stock periodically meant that no fire precautions had been taken — no sprinklers, no fire drills….

Blanck and Harris managed to beat a manslaughter rap with the help of a smart lawyer and a tainted judge. They made $60,000 from the fire — more than $400 per dead worker — and two years later were caught locking another stairwell door in yet another firetrap factory. (NYT, 9/7)

Many prefer a life of equality

Mr. Cai expressed a common ambivalence about China's recent history….

"Life was poorer under Mao, but it was also more equal," he said. "These days there's more rich and more poor. Overall, I think it was better under Mao." (NYT, 7/29)

Honored historian stays red

Mr. Hobsbawm is…a committed communist who never really left the party (he let his membership lapse just before the collapse of the Soviet Union)….

He [is] an emeritus professor at the University of London and holds countless honorary degrees around the world, from China to Sweden….

In "Interesting Times," he praises aspects of Communist Russia and argues that in some countries, notably the former U.S.S.R., life is worse now than it was under the Socialist system….

Mr. Hobsbaum does…a section explaining why he did not abandon Communism in 1956…. He says he was strongly repelled by the idea of being in the company of those ex-Communists who turned into fanatical anti-Communists. More important, perhaps,…he was…tied by an almost unbreakable umbilical cord to hope of world revolution, and of its original home, the October Revolution, however skeptical or critical of the U.S.S.R." he writes.

"Let's put it this way…. I still think it was a great cause, the emancipation of humanity. Maybe we got onto it the wrong way,…but you have to be in that race, or else humanity isn't worth living…."

He commands a loyal following, particularly in Latin America…. At a literary festival in Parati, Brazil…[he] was accosted by fans demanding his autograph as he walked around town. (NYT, 8/23)

Pope ordered sex cover-up

A confidential order issued by the Vatican 40 years ago instructing Roman Catholic bishops to conceal cases of sex abuse is set to reignite controversy over the church's treatment of suspect priests.

The document, On the Manner of Proceeding In Cases Of The Crime Of Solicitation, and bearing the seal of Pope John XXIII, threatened those who spoke out about the inquiries with excommunication. (GW, 8/27)

Industrial Workers Key to Bosses' War Machine— WIn Them To Communism

(With this article, CHALLENGE begins a series on the role of the industrial working class in the struggle against imperialist war and for communist revolution.)

When the liberal media bemoan the fate of industrial workers, watch out. The crocodile tears mean the bosses are planning to get us into a mess even worse than the horrors of racist unemployment. As CHALLENGE has regularly pointed out over the last several years, U.S. rulers' need to dominate the world will lead to a series of ever-widening wars.

These wars have already begun. The U.S. military is bogged down in open-ended occupations of Afghanistan and Iraq. More conflict is on the horizon. The politicians are squabbling about the number of soldiers required for present and future imperialist invasions. The political blowhards will make a big issue of this question during the 2004 presidential campaign. Regardless of the tactical details, millions of young U.S. workers face a future under arms.

But besides the battlefield component of the imperialists' war machine. there's also the industrial component. Millions of workers are needed at the point of production to provide the hardware of warfare. The discrepancy between this need and the reality of today's mass manufacturing layoffs highlights one of the profit system's sharpest economic contradictions. On the one hand, capitalism's boom-bust cycles make unemployment inevitable. On the other hand, the system demands a huge workforce to produce the tanks, airplanes, bombs and ships required by an imperialist military.

Mobilizing For War

The rulers are acutely conscious of this problem, in both its historical and contemporary dimensions. In 1924, they created the Industrial College of the Armed Forces (ICAF) to train military officers, government officials, and business executives "in the field of national security." Previous ICAF leaders read like a civilian and military Who's Who of U.S. imperialism. The ICAF currently focuses its attention on "material acquisition and logistics," in other words, mobilizing the economy for warfare. It has an entire department of Grand Strategy and Mobilization. The sobering conclusions of its Industry Surveys for the year 2000 add a new dimension to the liberal rulers' complaints about the ineptitude of the Bush crowd's economic policies. According to this report:

U.S. aircraft industry dominance "has eroded to the point that necessitates vigorous action…to preserve this vital element of national power";

"There are not enough people in the education pipeline to meet the high-technology engineering requirements of the electronics industry." The big high-tech military bosses are so desperate for new recruits that Raytheon sends its "female engineers to Girl Scout meetings to promote the engineering field for women," and "the defense electronics section of Northrup Grumman has a "mentor program for under-privileged high school students in Maryland that includes free college tuition";

"Steel remains vital to the United States economy and its military." But the ICAF wizards recognize that the steel industry hasn't been profitable. To meet security needs and help the steel bosses make profit, corporations must "divest themselves of…legacy costs" like "long-term employee benefits and liabilities" — in other words, cut the pensions of hundreds of thousands of retirees, as in the recent bankruptcy-takeover scam at Bethlehem Steel;

"The construction industry is facing an unprecedented nationwide shortage of skilled and semi-skilled labor." It needs "240,000 workers each year to replace those that are retiring or leaving." The ICAF's approach of dangling carrots to win new high-tech workers turns into a stick where construction is concerned: "Calling up reserves or drafting civilians will be policy options if the threat is severe enough."

War Industries Face Deficit

A related 1999 report by Inforum, a University of Maryland think-tank, underscores the ICAF's worries. Entitled "Constraints to Increased U.S. Defense Spending," it warns that for two "full-scale" conflicts like Iran and North Korea, the "required commitments of manpower, ships, aircraft, tanks, vehicles, and ammunition could be much larger than…at any time since World War II." The report goes on to predict a 750,000 deficit between the number of workers available and the number needed in key war-related industries between 2003 and 2005. Below is a partial breakdown:

Shipbuilding and repairing	174,000
Engineering and architectural services	118,000
Aircraft and missile parts	101,000
Aircraft	73,000

These figures cover only the workforce needed to supply the military for action against Iran and North Korea. They don't begin to approach the millions more the bosses will require to conscript for war production when the inevitable struggles take place between the U.S. and other major imperialists.

Despite today's layoffs, the idea that the U.S. profit system no longer needs a large industrial and manufacturing workforce is an absurd illusion. Industrial workers are more crucial than ever to society. As Karl Marx explained 150 years ago, the growing numbers of unemployed constitute a "reserve army," which the bosses plan on drafting either directly into the military or else into war production under police-state conditions. When the liberal politicians talk about unemployment, this is their real agenda. The racist slave-labor "Workfare" scheme of the liberal Clinton administration was an important step in this direction.

But the same working class which the bosses need to generate their profits, build their war machines and fight their wars has the potential to shut down the war machine, turn the guns around, and smash the racist warmakers. Only two classes can hold political power: the capitalists or a communist-led working class. Our Party's chief priority remains winning industrial workers and soldiers to fight over the long haul for communist revolution.

(Next: Why are the liberal rulers suddenly so concerned about workers' health and the low level of math and science education in the U.S.?)

GENERAL, YOUR TANK IS A POWERFUL VEHICLE

It smashes down forests and crushes a hundred men.
But it has one defect:
It needs a driver.

General, your bomb is powerful.
It flies faster than a storm and carries more than an elephant.
But it has one defect:
It needs a mechanic.

General, man is very useful.
He can fly and he can kill.
But he has one defect:
He can think.

Bertolt Brecht, German Communist Poet and Playwright

Patriotism A Killer For U.S. Workers

VALPARAISO, IN, July 30 — "We're giving our enemies our defense technology and your 225 jobs." That's what U.S. Rep. Pete Visclosky, D-Ind., said, and he's the liberal! Visclosky was speaking to 150 workers protesting the closing of the Magnequench plant, which produces rare-earth magnets used in U.S. imperialism's deadly "smart bombs." Magnequench, Inc. bought the magnet-making factory about two years ago and is now relocating the operation to China. The plant will close Sept. 30.

The rally was organized by United Steelworkers of America District 7, who, along with the Democrats, turned a rally for jobs into a rally for war. Union organizer Mike O'Brien called Magnequench President Archibald Cox, Jr. "a traitor to this country," by moving the plant to China.

Layoffs at the plant began in mid-July, when about 30 workers were dumped. Frances Arney, single mother of four, lost her job at the start of a second round of layoffs. "Today they let me go after six years and 40 days," she said. One more day would have meant an additional $125 and another month of health insurance coverage.

Democratic Party politicians and the union leaders are totally impotent in the face of mass layoffs and racist unemployment, so they wrap themselves in the bosses' flag and cry, "Treason!" But it's all a cynical attempt to take workers' anger and turn it into more patriotism and war fever. As far as "giving away the war machine," forget it. U.S. imperialism has a long history of "trading with the enemy." (See the book by the same name.) U.S. bosses were entertaining a Japanese trade delegation when Pearl Harbor was bombed, and dozens of U.S. corporations, including Ford and GM, had factories up and running inside Nazi Germany all during WWII. In fact, they received money from the Marshall Plan for any factories that were accidentally bombed by U.S. pilots!

Mass racist unemployment and factory closings are reasons to reject patriotism, not embrace it. Many workers already grasp this. One sign at the rally read, "U.S. and Chinese Workers...United in Poverty." We will expose the Democrats and union leaders and build a movement that knows no borders, for international communist revolution.✪

CIA — Criminal Intelligence Agency

The CIA…recently graduated the largest class of new officers in [its] history…. Many are assuming fake identities and heading overseas. Their job will be to steal secrets….

It is difficult work, says Steven Aftergood, a longtime observer of the CIA with the Federation of American Scientists.

"Basically, what you're trying to do…is to persuade the other fellow to betray his country, to commit a crime, and to run the risk of severe penalty." (Associated Press, 8/22)